

**DEVELOPING OF GLOBALIZATION AND MASS MEDIA IN THE
WORLD, ESPECIALLY USA**

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Abstract : The Global Media Defence Fund supports not-for-profit civil society organizations working on the ground to implement innovative programming for enhancing media protection and improving the access of journalists to specialized and gender-sensitive legal assistance.

Keywords: global media, concentration of media firms, the cultural imperialism thesis would sustain, foreign policy, media corporations, pscale projects.

**РАЗВИТИЕ ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИИ И СМИ В МИРЕ, ОСОБЕННОСТИ
США**

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Аннотация : Глобальный фонд защиты СМИ поддерживает некоммерческие организации гражданского общества, работающие на местах над реализацией инновационных программ по усилению защиты СМИ и улучшению доступа

журналистов к специализированной и гендерно-чувствительной юридической помощи.

Ключевые слова: глобальные средства массовой информации, концентрация медиакомпаний, поддержка тезиса о культурном империализме, внешняя политика, медиакорпорации, масштабные проекты.

Global media today are thus moving across borders and building alliances with local forms. Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation has had an extensive reach, with subsidiaries in Europe, the US, Asia and Australia. Much of what audiences worldwide receive from the media comes from a small number of corporations, like News Corporation, Disney, Time Warner, Viacom and ITC and associated press agencies (CNN, BBC, Reuters, AP, UPI, Bloomberg). News Corporation owns the Fox channel, The Times and The Sun newspapers. Murdoch has managed to expand his global media empire through the successful establishment of satellite TV systems worldwide. By the 1990's, Murdoch claimed to have TV networks and systems that reached more than 75% of the world's population, having launched satellite systems in Latin America, Japan and India and established agreements with national media systems, including with TV Globo in Brazil, as well as conquering markets in China and India. Murdoch is seen by critics as being too powerful, and of attempting to influence national and global politics, including the case of the wooing of the support of The Sun for Tony Blair's election in 1997.

The concentration of media firms in the hands of few owners is pointed out by critics as threatening diversity, impeding real competition, forcing smaller players out of the market, and contributing to reinforce conservative views of the world, marginalising dissent or content that does not generate profit or which is seen as challenging to capitalist values.

Boyd-Barrett (1998) has argued for a re-conceptualization of imperialism as a process of colonization of communication space, highlighting that such a phrase helps us understand which voices get to be heard and which are excluded, making

one conscious of communication space as a site of struggle.

Although the media industries are not exclusively American anymore as the cultural imperialism thesis would sustain, the global media system today is largely owned by various Western corporations (Japanese, German, British, American), with none of them coming from any of the developing countries, either Asia or South America. Thus in spite of the recognition of reverse flows and that global media companies are not necessarily all American, the case for still understanding cultural globalization through the concept of “Americanization” is still a persuasive one if one looks at global (American) media symbols such as CNN, the success that Hollywood blockbusters encounter worldwide and the exportation of American television series internationally.

The US is seen as a model of commercial media to which all other countries, including Europe with its tradition of strong public service broadcasting, are moving towards. The shift in Europe towards commercialization was influenced by American policy and US interests. US programmes are still the predominant non-domestic viewing in most European states, with South European as well as Latin American countries having the highest imports of American programming. Satellite and cable channels, including Sky and MTV, also contain large amounts of US programming. In the case of Latin America, the origins of a market-oriented US style of press can traced back to the years when South

The 24 hour international news agency CNN, owned by Ted Turner and seen as the embodiment of the ultimate global media corporation, started to transmit instant news from Gulf War 1 in 1991. Since then scholars have talked about the potential effects that CNN can have on policy-making (the so-called “CNN effect”) and the ways in which its global reporting can have an influence on US foreign policy. CNN broadcast news around the world via a combination of satellites and cable television outlets and was praised for its successful usage of the newest news-gathering technology, the satellite-fed connection. In the aftermath of

the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Qatar based television station Al Jazeera, which had been launched in 1996, started to compete with CNN and other international broadcasters, and to provide an alternative network of news about the war. It also strengthened its position in the Arab world as a forum of debate of non-Western views, which for some could assist in challenging the hegemony of American culture and their views on foreign policy.

Critics also affirm that transnational media are eroding national media. International satellite TV and video for instance is said to be weakening the Bombay film industry, whilst in Brazil TV Globo has seen a decline in its viewership, power and influence due both to competition from international cable and satellite channels. In terms of what gets globalized, this includes fiction, music, television genres which are considered to have originated in the US, such as talk-shows, TV news programmes, sitcoms and comedy as well as “infotainment”. The latter is seen as being a mixture of information with entertainment, and is a consequence of the growing commercialization of the media worldwide and the economic pressures which media corporations end up imposing on current affairs to make them more attractive to larger audiences.

Transformations in international communication have created the perception for many of increased interconnectedness, of a shrinking of the world. New media technologies and the Internet have intensified this interconnectedness between countries and the rapid spread of information, news, content and programming. Neo-Marxists scholars such as Mattelart and Castells have examined the process of globalization by questioning the impact of technological developments on the ways in which societies, cultures and individuals function and understand themselves. Marshall McLuhan (1911-80) nonetheless was one of the first thinkers to analyse the impact of media technology on society, articulating a theory considered ground-breaking when it came out in the 1960's, and which consisted in basically saying that the rise of new communication technologies would culminate in

the creation of a “global village” capable of enhancing international understanding between people and forging new communities.¹

Computerized technology, satellite TV and the Internet have also contributed to the reduction of the cost of communications, stimulating home-made productions and gradually widening the access of many to these technologies. In his discussion of the impact of technologies on everyday life, Castells (2000), considered one of the main philosophers of cyberspace, has shown how the Internet has revolutionized international information exchange due to its ability in moving data across borders. He has also pointed out how the Internet has become well suited for the expanding individualism of contemporary reality, with consumers using the web to create their own content and distribute it to global audiences. The Internet is also seen as strengthening the cultural identities of diasporic peoples, as well as assisting in social networking and in forging ties with like-minded individuals, social groups and various communities across the globe.

In contrast to other communication media, the Internet has been the fastest-growing sector of the media. The expansion of the Internet has been enormous: there were 20 million users in 1995 and 400 million by the year 2000. By 2006, the Internet was considered a global medium, jumping from reaching 3% of the world's population to more than 15%, mostly in the developed countries, with North America having a penetration rate of 30% and Europe and the Asia-Pacific with 30% as well (Thussu, 2006, 208).²

The Global Media Defence Fund supports specialized not-for-profit organizations to undertake or upscale projects that:

1. Foster international legal cooperation and the sharing & implementation of good practices to promote the defense of journalists under attack;

¹ Thompson, John (1995) *The Media and Modernity: a social theory of the media*, Cambridge: Polity Press

² Tomlinson, John (1999) *Globalization and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press

2. Reinforce the operationalization of national protection mechanisms and peer support networks to ensure journalists' rapid access to legal assistance, bolster their defense and enhance their safety, taking into account the gendered nature of the threats against them;
3. Support investigative journalism that contributes to reduced impunity for crimes against journalists; and to enhancing the safety of those conducting this line of work; and
4. Enhance structures for fostering strategic litigation in order to protect environments where the legal frameworks are conducive to an independent, free, and pluralistic media ecosystem.

Media corporations have been heavily investing in the convergence between the Internet and television and in communication strategies that operate across platforms. American Online and Time Warner for instance merged in 2000 to create an Internet-based media giant which brought together both the old and new media, including film, television, radio, publishing and computing. Giant web portals have also emerged and are contributing to concentrate information, access and profits, with Google "revolutionizing" the way information is processed and used across the world.

Significant inequalities remain nonetheless in the capacity of individuals to have access to the Internet and to new communication technologies, both in developing countries as well as within different social strata of advanced societies. This was a central concern of the cultural imperialism debates in the 1970's, but the issue of the "digital divide" has become much more of a pressing issue now in the current context of expanding globalization of new technologies and inequality in their distribution. Many developing countries in the South for instance cannot meet the high costs of initial investment in the updating of their telecommunications systems and in the buying of equipment and software.

The Internet has had a significant political role in facilitating the connection

between groups, assisting the activities of social movements in organising “anti-globalization” protests and the mobilization of NGOs and political parties of civil society groups and voters. It has emerged as a key medium, alongside alternative communications and public media, which is seen by many media scholars, journalists and social activists as being capable of widening media democratization worldwide, of revitalising the public sphere and of functioning mainly as a resistance to the dominance of global communications by a few corporations interested mainly in entertainment and profits.

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